

Upsurge unites fight for freedom in Haiti

By BETTIE MARTIN

PORT-AU-PRINCE, May 15 — (LNS)—For the first time since 1966, the peasants of Haiti have risen against "Papa Doc" Duvalier's brutality oppressive regime in major confrontations.

In one incident, battle near the capital was so fierce that even the government had to admit its occurrence — and the death of one officer.

These and other events this year point to the existence of a revolutionary vanguard inside the country — not merely among exiles on the outside.

This group, fighting under the most repressive conditions to be found anywhere except perhaps in South Africa, has shown its bravery. Its members have a strong, Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideology.

Although the founders are mostly of urban background, the group has not merely established a relationship with the peasantry but has helped develop peasant leadership.

For years, the Haitian revolutionary movement has been plagued by internal problems, lack of resources, and oppression by Duvalier, who does not stop at the murder of children.

Two parties merge

Last January, the two Communist parties (P.U.D.A., Parti Union, Demokrates Aisiin as called in Creole, and P.E.P., Parti Entente Populaire), merged in one—the P.U.C.H. (Parti Unifie des Communistes Haitiens).

Duvalier's response to this unification was, in the words of the Feb. 12 issue of Boukan, the new party's organ, "a vast repression against the Haitian Communist movement. Several comrades and sympathizers have been arrested. The Tonton Macoutes (elite police corps) have been conducting searches, and taking advantage of this to

steal."

Boukan said:

"The majority of those threatened have been able to escape. Our comrades have not let themselves be captured like sheep. Thus, one of our members, who met the detectives with his pistol, was able to escape with the help of the people. This was right in the middle of the street near St. Gerard, in Port-Au-Prince. Another, after threatening two Macoutes with his weapon, was able to escape into the carnival crowd.

"Everywhere the population helped the militants by warning them of danger or refusing to give information when questioned by the authorities. In performing their dirty task, the Macoutes have been helped by American CIA agents."

Arms won

The question of how to obtain arms has always been a hard one for the revolutionary movement. One answer was demonstrated on the night of March 3-4, in the town of Cap Haitien on the northern coast of Haiti. A Macoute was executed by local members of the P.U.C.H., and his gun and ammunition were liberated.

On March 25 came the peasant battle. At Cazale, about 25 miles from Port-Au-Prince, a group of peasants revolted, according to the description published in Lambi, an exile publication, driving out the lieutenant on duty and the guards. They forced the Macoutes to take down the photographs of Duvalier, burn the flag of the tyranny, cry "Down with Duvalier!" and raise the red-and-blue flag.

They posted the slogan "Long Live the Parti Unifie des Communistes Haitiens" everywhere. Three peasant leaders addressed a gathering of the people, explaining the purpose of their action: "to take the lead in an armed movement against tyranny and misery."

The group then went back into the mountains with the support struggle. Militiamen in the area refused to pursue them.

Duvalier maintained silence about the incident and the popular resistance movement.

Two and a half weeks later, on Duvalier's birthday, he got a surprise greeting. On April 14, in a settlement called Boutilliers about 10 miles north of Port-au-Prince, there was an armed clash with government forces. The government censored news of the event. Apparently Duvalier had sent Macoutes to a house in the area to arrest certain persons—and they defended themselves.

Duvalier later claimed he wiped out "the citadel" of the P.U.C.H., killed 30 Communists (no names given) and confiscated arms, documents, and printing equipment.

The dead were all buried immediately, it was stated. This suggests that Duvalier had something important to lie about, since it has always been his policy to parade the bodies of important murdered opponents. The government itself admitted in the local press that it was a serious battle and that one officer was killed.

One report said that a key member of the rebel group was a woman, who defended herself bravely until killed or captured. A wave of new and random arrests followed the April 14 battle.

Boukan commented: "We will not cease our efforts to overthrow Duvalier and his aides, abolish the domination of American imperialism in Haiti, and bring about the establishment of socialism."